

East Preston Memorials

By RW Standing

Great War Centenary Memorials

Those who have only known the village over the past generation, may imagine the garden area by the library is where the village and parish has always had its war memorial. a central location in The Street. But in fact the village was unusual in not having a central stone memorial of this kind, until 1991. For the previous seventy years a more secluded memorial had served, within the parish church, which says something about the kind of village that used to exist.

The situation was even more involved than that. There were in fact three Great War memorials serving the attached parishes of Kingston and East Preston. Then another for WW2, and finally the 1991 plain stone slab commemorating both wars.

Although a village memorial was mooted, only a church triptych on the wall of the south aisle, came to fruition in 1922. A painted wooden panel in three sections that fold over, with the names of the fallen inscribed on the wings, and a figure of St George in the centre. A panel underneath reads:

Jesu Mercy. In undying Memory of the Officers and Men from this Parish who gave their Lives in the Great War 1914 - 1918 Faithful Unto Death.

To be correct the names were those of the combined parishes of East Preston and Kingston. This was paid for by subscription, the whole memorial included a newly acquired organ, the one that still stands close by.

At Kingston a more conventional stone cross on a plinth was erected, south of East Kingston farm, For good reason, it was probably paid for largely by Mr Candy the owner, who had lost his own son. And all four names are of men who had lived in east Kingston. It was not altered after WW2 although a name could have been added.

To the Glory of God IN GRATITUDE TO ALL WHO FOUGHT AND TO THE DEAR MEMORY OF THOSE FROM THIS PARISH WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR 1914 - 1918

The third known memorial, is today lost to sight, at the corner of the Parade shops in Sea Road. It is a simple metal plaque, without names.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE MEN OF THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-18 THIS CLOCK TOWER WAS ERECTED BY THE FOUNDER OF ANGMERING-ON-SEA That is to say a private memorial provided by William Hollis, and perhaps his term 'neighbourhood' signified all local villages, including Rustington and Angmering. A news magazine he produced covered these villages.

Following the second world war, Dorothy Paget the churchwarden's wife, made a small folder with leather cover and illuminated text. This has been framed and exhibited in the tower entrance of late years. A line above the names, reads:

Rest Eternal grant to them O Lord and let light perpetual shine upon them.

The Village Memorial of 1991

Returning to what is now the principal village memorial, for both East Preston and Kingston. This was paid for by subscription, and devised by the Royal British Legion. A plain slab on a plinth in a memorial garden. Two lists of names represent those who died in two wars, from both of the parishes.

TO THE UNDYING MEMORY OF THOSE FROM THIS PARISH WHO
GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY

Traditionally the Royal British Legion has paraded to the parish church on Remembrance Day. Since 1991 this has been extended, with a return to the village memorial and a service. There is then a smaller scale commemoration at Kingston.

Although the remembrance services are about those who died, as a whole, and not so much about particular individuals, knowing who they were avoids misunderstandings. Most significantly that men and women from both parishes are listed on the main memorials.

As might be expected, all of those named for the Great War were men who died either in Belgium-France, the Middle East, or in naval battles. Airship and Gotha bomber raiders on this country by-passed East Preston, and so there are no civilian casualties. But in WW2 we were not so fortunate, with several victims from air raids, mainly forces personnel but including one civilian death.

Of the those men recorded for the Great War, four were from Kingston out of a village population of less than seventy, old and young men, women and children. Eighteen from East Preston out of perhaps five hundred villagers, excluding the workhouse, with some families losing two sons. What then for WW2 - a similar number were lost, but out of several times the population, in the order of 1,500 villagers.

The sentiments expressed by the dedications on these memorials are interesting, reflecting how they originated. Apart from Goring, there may be no other memorial in Sussex, using the words: 'Jesu Mercy'. While, 'jn undying memory,' 'rest eternal,' and 'faithful unto death,' are more common, and 'to the glory of God,' is widespread.

Ranks, and units in which men served, are not mentioned on the village memorial. Appropriately enough, since as remembrance has nothing to do with rank. But it is of historical interest, and the church triptych does provide these details, in part.

It can be taken for granted that the majority served in the Royal Sussex in 1914-18, and indeed 12 of the 22 who died were in various battalions of the county regiment, 3 in the Navy, and the remaining 7 in a variety of units, including just one come back from Canada, in its infantry.

Fairly proportionately there were 13 privates, and another 6 as NCOs or similar, and 3 officers including midshipman Candy. Although, unsurprisingly, the two officers were from South Strand, and another 5 officers who had been living there returned home after the war, the older part of the village and Kingston also had 5 officers who returned, but not all unscathed. One of these had served in the fledgling RAF.

In comparison, the range of units in which men served was greater in WW2, with the RAF at the fore. And it is quite remarkable that at least half those named on the memorial were officers.

There were, inevitably, a few in the addition to those named, who died after the Armistice of 1918, perhaps years afterwards. These only have their own family memorials.

RWS 2014

Those Who Died WW2

Kirkham	16th May 1940	Sergeant
Marpole	10th July 1940 [at home]	Civilian
de Courcy	18th Aug. 1940	Lieutenant
Commander Young	18th Aug. 1940	Lieutenant
Commander Richardson	16th April 1941	Civilian
Middleton	2nd March 1942	Petty Officer
Williams PT	1st June 1942	Lieutenant
Gordon	2nd Aug. 1942 [at home]	Lieutenant
Lush	2nd Sept 1942 [at home]	Private
Way	14th Dec. 1942	Captain
Galloway	6th Jan. 1943	Private
Williams Morgan	15th Jan. 1943	Pilot ATA
Smithers	26th March 1943 [at home]	Aircraftwoman
Pitts	3rd April 1943	Sergeant
Antunovich	13th Jan 1944	Sub-lieutenant
Songhurst	6th Feb. 1944	Aircraftman
Craig	20th March 1944	Major
Richold	11th Aug. 1944	Sergeant
Hilton	26th Aug. 1944	Gunner
Compton	29th Sept 1944	Squadron Leader
Greenough	1st March 1945	Private
Bayliss	20th March 1945 [at home]	Lieutenant
Denison	30th March 1945	Major
Davis	27th Oct. 1946	Sergeant

24 names 11 officers
 4 NCOs
 6 Privates, Gunner, Aircraftman
 3 Civilians and ATA

